

April 25, 2013

Honorable Mark Pryor
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Dirksen Building, 184
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Dirksen Building, 184
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Pryor and Ranking Member Blunt:

As the subcommittee begins its consideration of a Fiscal Year 2014 appropriation bill for the agencies within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, I respectfully request support for the programs listed below. The funding requested for the national programs is to be spent at the agencies' discretion within the existing budget line and is not intended for any specific business, state, community or other entity.

1. Title: Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program Account

Program Description: The Water and Waste Disposal program is authorized by sections 306, 306A, 309A, 306C, 306D, 306E, and 310B of the *Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act* (7 U.S.C. 1921 et seq., as amended). This program makes loans for water and waste development costs. Development loans are made to associations, including corporations operating on a nonprofit basis, municipalities and similar organizations, generally designated as public or quasi-public agencies, which propose projects for the development, storage, treatment, purification, and distribution of domestic water or the collection, treatment, or disposal of waste in rural areas.

Fiscal Year 2014 President's Budget Request: \$304 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$75 million

Rationale: The Water and Waste Disposal program provides financing for rural communities to establish, expand or modernize water treatment and waste disposal facilities. These facilities provide safe drinking water and sanitary waste disposal for residential users, and help communities thrive by attracting new business. Additional funds are required to meet needs of communities and restore funding to historical levels. The program was funded at \$471 million in Fiscal Year 2012 and at \$495.7 million in Fiscal Year 2013.

Report Language: The Committee recommends \$66,500,000 for water and waste disposal systems grants for Native Americans, including Native Alaskans, the Colonias, and residents of Hawaiian Home Lands. The Committee recognizes the special needs and problems for delivery of basic services to these populations.

Recipient: Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Services

2. Title: Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

Program Description: This funding assists farmers and ranchers who are at a competitive disadvantage due to high transportation costs and geography by reimbursing producers for a portion of the transportation cost of their agricultural commodity, or transporting inputs used to produce an agricultural commodity during a fiscal year.

Fiscal Year 2014 President's Budget Request: \$0

Additional Amount Requested: +\$2 million

Rationale: The *Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008* authorized the Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers program. However this program did not receive funding in the President's Budget request for Fiscal Year 2014. Congress has added \$2 million for this program in the last two years' appropriations.

Recipient: Department of Agriculture, Supplemental Assistance

3. Title: High Energy Cost Grants

Program Description: Provides funding for energy and other rural development purposes in areas that have high energy costs.

Fiscal Year 2014 President's Budget Request: \$0

Additional Amount Requested: +\$18M

Rationale: The President's Budget request cuts the High Energy Cost Grant program which improves and provides energy generation, transmission and distribution facilities for communities with average home energy costs exceeding 275 percent of the national average. Grant funds may be used for on-grid and off-grid renewable energy projects, energy efficiency and energy conservation projects. Recognizing the significance of this program, Congress provided funding for this program in Fiscal Year 2012 in the amount of \$12 million and \$20 million in Fiscal Year 2013.

Recipient: Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Services

4. Title: Agriculture Research Enhancement Awards

Program Description: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Experimental Program for Stimulating Competitive Research (EPSCoR) is designed to help institutions develop competitive research, education and extension/outreach programs in high-priority areas of national need in agriculture, food, and environmental sciences.

Support Fiscal Year 2014 President's Budget Request: \$801.140 million

Report Language Requested: The Committee remains determined to see that the quality of research and enhanced human resources development in the agricultural and related

Chairman Pryor and Ranking Member Blunt

April 25, 2013

Page 3

sciences be a nationwide commitment. Therefore, the Committee continues its direction that not less than 15 percent of the competitive research grants funds be used for USDA's agriculture research enhancement awards program (including USDA-EPSCoR), in accordance with 7 U.S.C. 450i.

Rationale: It is important that the citizenry in all regions of the country benefit from a strong scientific and technological enterprise. The Committee included similar language in the report in Fiscal Year 2013.

Recipient: Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Research and Education Activities.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. Please do not hesitate to contact my staff member, Lindsay Kavanaugh, at (202) 224-1924 if additional information is required.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich
United States Senator